



“CONSTRUCTING A WAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE”

ECA NEWSLETTER

JOHNS SOAPBOX



Remember-this is an op-ed piece and I do not speak for the ECA or any of its members in this “Soapbox”. These are just my ramblings that hopefully you find thought provoking.



Some Good... Some Bad

Maybe the title of this week’s Soapbox is not “News”, but there is enough happening out there where I thought an update with some comments would be interesting.

Let’s start with the old **Sonoma County Community Hospital Site on Chanate Road in Santa Rosa:**

1. Some 10 years ago, Sutter Health relocated to Mark West Springs Road and left a deteriorating group of buildings that the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma wanted to see developed. Several iterations of projects have been proposed and several “sales” have been pursued with developers over the years. The most recent one has a development team of Iyad Haddad and George Maalouf who purchased the property from the County in December of 2021 for \$15.05 million. The new owners would like to see some 879 housing units built on the site, and interested residents can write in to let the City of Santa Rosa know what they think by December 20, 2024. Folks can email to woodlandsatchanate@srcity.com. There will be an in person public hearing on December 16, 2024 at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa starting at 6pm as well. If the last public hearing is any clue as to the amount of participation to expect from folks (which I attended many years ago), there will be plenty of passionate speakers opposed to the project and precious few in favor of the proposed project. Although detailed site plans have not been submitted yet, the developers have filed an application to amend the land use designation and rezone the property to allow up to 879 housing units to be built. The article showing the general idea of the development can be seen here [Environmental review of Chanate campus redevelopment getting underway - The Press Democrat](#)

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2. San Rafael Northgate Town Square Project:

Northgate Town Square project wins approval in San Rafael [Northgate Town Square wins approval in San Rafael | NorthBay biz](#). Years ago, Merlone Geier was an ECA member, and I worked to secure approval for their Petaluma projects (Friedmans and the Target project on E. Washington near fairgrounds). This development team just won approval in San Rafael for the Northgate Town Hall project in San Rafael. Merlone Geier is based out of San Francisco and is a very competent developer of shopping malls and housing. This (in my opinion) is a great step forward by San Rafael for developing moderately priced housing units for professionals and young families in Marin County. Congratulations to Merlone Geier, the Planners and decision makers at the City of San Rafael, and the residents of San Rafael. This project will enhance the life of the community! Breaking ground by summer of 2025 is the plan!

3. The Hotel at the Windsor Town Green:

For well over a year we have been looking at a “hole” at the Southeast corner of the Windsor Town Square [Will the Windsor Town Green’s mar-quee McClelland Hotel ever be built? - The North Bay Business Journal](#).

Windsor has a structural budget problem like many other cities. Windsor needs more businesses/jobs/residents to continue to afford the services residents need/deserve/should have. Despite that fact, a signature project proposed by Robert Green at the north end of the Windsor Town Green was killed several years ago, and a new signature project, the McLelland Hotel with a rooftop bistro and outdoor dining space and 158 rooms, was proposed by developer Tom Birdsall.

The town Planning Commission approved Birdsall plans for the project in mid-December 2020. Construction documents were submitted in November 2021, and an outside firm reviewed the plans to make sure they complied with town building codes and other requirements.

But it took 17 months for the building permits to be issued, after multiple rounds of back-and-forth and resubmittals.

Birdsall said he was surprised it took that long.

“We have a very experienced team,” he said. “We could have started in May of 2022.”

When the delay pushed back construction over one year, Birdsall ran into higher interest rate problems that made his approved project untenable. Quickly pivoting, Birdsall proposed an alternative project that reduced the # of rooms by 12% and lopped off one story, and got approval by the Planning department.

Despite approval by the planning commission, the alternate project was killed almost immediately after being opposed by Council members Sam Salmon and Debora Fudge through something called the town’s “appeal” process.

Continued from page 2

At this point, Birdsall's team is working with the Planners to see if there is a project that makes sense to build. Lesson to be learned. No salmon taste good with fudge on it.

4. The **Sonoma Developmental Center project** is in question. Eldridge Renewal LLC, led by old friend Keith Rogal, has had their project EIR and the Specific Plan that would set the framework for their proposed housing and retail project, decertified. See—[Massive Sonoma Developmental Center housing plan sees another major setback - The North Bay Business Journal](#).

A vocal group of homeowners and citizens led a coordinated effort to oppose the EIR and Plan as non-responsive to their concerns regarding traffic problems that a new development might cause. This is a very complex issue that the State of California started many years ago when they, in essence, abandoned their rundown property and directed Sonoma County to sell it and get a developer to provide a comprehensive infrastructure plan to redevelop the site into housing. Trying to “thread the needle” proved too much for local residents who always wanted lower density to be considered on the site. However, lower density means lower sales/rentals, and the developing firm (Eldridge Renewal LLC) had expensive infrastructure needs to consider.

The County is disappointed but not surprised and the developer has not responded to the latest decertification decision. At the least, the decertification muddies the waters considerably, if not outright killing the proposed development.

In conclusion, these stories show how complicated it is to get a major project approved with financial considerations that allow developers to make enough profit to move forward. Kudos to San Rafael and Merlone Geier for getting it done! Fingers crossed for the Woodlands at Chanate! Condolences for Tom Birdsall and the residents of Windsor, and probably “taps” for the Eldridge Renewal LLC project.

We still have the Rohnert Park downtown project moving forward as well! Fingers crossed!

That's All Folks!
John

NEWS YOU CAN USE

1. **Adobe Associates announce Promotions:** [Santa Rosa's Adobe Associates names Moreno, Talbot shareholders - The North Bay Business Journal](#)
2. **\$1 Billion for Northbay school projects approved by voters-** [Billion-plus in school construction OK'd in November election - The North Bay Business Journal](#)
3. **Fort Bragg calls a temporary truce to develop Mill site-**[Fort Bragg and Mendocino Railway enter a 90-day stay agreement - The North Bay Business Journal](#)
4. Click [HERE](#) for upcoming bids lists for the City of Santa Rosa

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Save the Dates!

Installation & Awards Dinner - Saturday, February 1, 2025

Public Officials Night - Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Father's Day Car Show - Sunday, June 15, 2025

ECA Golf Tournament - Friday, July 11, 2025

Wine & Dozers Auction—Saturday, November 1, 2025

The advertisement for Sound Ideas Media features a logo with a green drone icon above the text "Sound Ideas MEDIA" in a stylized font. Below the logo, it lists services: "Aerial Video & Stills", "Video & Commercial Production", "Photography ★ Animation", "Info & Motion Graphics", and "Virtual Events ★ Media Services". At the bottom left, it says "SOUNDIDEASMEDIA.TV" and "707.321.6803". On the right, there is a photograph of a bridge over a river, with the caption "Warm Springs Dam, Sonoma County" below it.

The Northern California Engineering Contractors Association
cordially invites you to attend our

47th Annual Installation & Awards Dinner

*Hyatt Regency
170 Railroad Square, Santa Rosa
Saturday, February 1, 2025*

*President's Champagne Reception 5:30 pm
Dinner & Awards 6:30 pm
Coffee, Dessert, Port & Cigars 8:30 pm*

Welcome incoming President:
Dan Giordani, Argonaut Constructors &
The 2025 ECA Board of Directors
We will be also honoring
Volunteers of the Year
Stephen Knuttel, The ECA Group
Contractor of the Year
Kevin Holtzinger, NorthWest General Engineering
Affiliate of the Year
Wendell Trappe, Canyon Rock
Ambassador Award
Mark Soiland, Soiland Company
The Hermsmeyer Hall of Fame Award
will be awarded to Troy Soiland, Northgate Ready Mix
Posthumous – Randy Parker, North Bay Petroleum

To Register for the Awards Dinner, click [HERE](#)

To Sponsor the Installation & Awards Dinner Click [HERE](#)!

Thank you!
Bulk Exchange—Bronze Sponsor

From the Desk of Jim Persons

Safety Concerns During the Holidays

When it comes to the festive season, there are additional safety concerns to think about. There are changes in weather and driving habits, shifts in work/life balance and, often, additional strains on the families. Without further ado, here are some of the biggest safety concerns during the holiday season.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



Workplace Violence Program

Implemented – July 1, 2024

Senate Bill 553 requires employers to create, implement and maintain a Workplace Violence Program by July 1, 2024. Employers must also train their entire workforce.

The Workplace Violence Program must include a reporting mechanism (how is the employee going to report incidents), detailing who will be responsible for receiving complaints, and who will be responsible for identifying and mitigating workplace hazards.

Jim Persons has developed a Workplace Violence Program and Active Shooter Guidelines that meet the requirements of this new regulation. He can also provide training resources for your employees.

Contact Jim if you are interested in getting his help on a Workplace Violence Program, COVID-19 related issues or other health and safety programs.

email: jimpersons@safetypride.com or phone: 707-889-0881 or sign up for an upcoming class!



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We want to highlight a member each week in our MEMBER SPOTLIGHT. What we need from you is a short paragraph on what is happening at your company. New employees, new logo, a new move, exciting news, an update on your company or new equipment! What ever you want to share about your company with our members.

Email mary@nceca.org with your spotlight information and send in photos if you have them!



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The advertisement features a background image of architectural blueprints, a yellow level, and a ruler. The text is overlaid on this image.

SAFETY CORNER

CPR / First Aid

Training includes bleeding control, strokes, seizures, broken bones and other life-threatening emergencies. Adult/child/infant CPR & airway obstruction management covered. This course is designed as both a course for first-timers and as a refresher.

Wednesday, January 8 / 1– 3 pm

Click [HERE](#) for January flyer

Confined Space

This course covers proper procedures for making entry into Permit Required Confined Spaces. Participants are prepared to operate in the capacity of Entrant, Attendant or Entry Supervisor during confined space operations. Participants are familiarized with CFR 1910.146 and how to properly employ the permit program. This course is a combination of classroom instruction and practical application in actual permit spaces utilizing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, meters and ventilation. This course is required by OSHA before an employee can enter a Permit Required Confined Space. Certification of completion is provided.

Wednesday, January 15 / 1– 3– pm

Click [HERE](#) for the January flyer.

Competent Person Trenching & Excavation

The course will cover soil analysis, sloping, shoring and shielding, hazardous situations, excavation standards and more...

Wednesday, December 11 / 1 pm–3:30 pm

Thursday, January 16 / 1–3:30 pm

Click [HERE](#) for December flyer.

Click [HERE](#) for January flyer.



WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Worker's Compensation Endorsement By ECA-

HELLO!!! HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES PERSON TO CHECK OUT THE WORKERS COMP PROGRAM ECA HAS ENDORSED? Everybody likes to save money, don't they? Doesn't cost you a thing to consider this as an option! Jeff Okrepkie at 707-360-4338.

[Flyer](#)



George Petersen Insurance Agency

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANUAL

In the event of an emergency, we have put together the Emergency Response Manual to help our community receive quick service from our members. The manual is sent to city and county agencies in case of an emergency so they will know who to call for services, equipment and materials.

Click [HERE](#) for the 2023-2024 manual.

It is time to update the Emergency Response Manual. Help us gather this important information so that we can best serve our community in the case of an emergency. Please fill out your contact information to the attached form, and email to mary@nceca.org. If you have any questions, call Mary at 707.546.5500 or mary@nceca.org. Thanks!

Click [HERE](#) for the emergency contact form

Click [HERE](#) to sponsor in the Emergency Response Manual

Get Prepared Now! Here are some very useful tips from CalFire to get your own house/property "in shape" for fire season. [link](#)

Pocket Guide for CALOSHA For Contractors: Click [here](#) for the pocket guide you all need!

Roadwork in Sonoma County - Check out the County website for road info [here](#)

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email: mary@nceca.org

Cheryl Long, Bookkeeper
email: cheryl@nceca.org

Postal Address: P.O. Box 8249 Santa Rosa, CA 95407 ~Phone: 707.546.5500



SEASON OF GIVING

Bring Joy to Club Families This Holiday Season Through Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marin's Holiday Gift Drive!

For 18 years, Boys & Girls Clubs has been asking community members like you to help hundreds of families through their Annual Gift Drive. This year, with over 300 families/1200 individuals in need, your kindness is more important than ever. They are collecting gift cards now through Friday, December 13th in order to ensure no family goes without this holiday season.

How Your Gift Helps:

- **\$150 Safeway Gift Card:** Provides a simple holiday meal
 - **\$75 Target Gift Card:** Brings warmth with a coat or joy with a toy
- \$50 Gas Gift Card:** Reunites families with a visit

Ways to Give:

- **Donate Gift Cards:** Deliver or mail them to 1400 N. Dutton Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

Adopt a Club Family: Receive a family's wish list by emailing Hayley Bly at hbly@bgcsonoma-marin.org. (attached is one of the 300 families in need)

Make a Direct Donation: Let us purchase gift cards on your behalf. <https://www.bgcsonoma-marin.org/holidays>



Together, we can ensure every family experiences the joy and dignity of the season. Questions? Contact Hayley Bly at hbly@bgcsonoma-marin.org.



Click [HERE](#) for Aaction Rents locations

Toys 4 Tots

United Rentals Trench Safety
is collecting toys for Toys for Tots!



They have a drop off bin located at their office at **3963 Santa Rosa Ave. Santa Rosa**

If you are unable to drop off your donations, a sales rep will come pick up!

They are asking that it is a \$10 value toy unwrapped.

